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ABSTRACT

A nationwide survey was conducted for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to determine school superintendents' planned use and implementation of Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS). Two hundred and fifty superintendants from 310 randomly-selected school districts with over 6,000 enrolled pupils responded to a postal card questionnaire. Data was also collected on size of district enrollment and current usage of in-class instructional television. Results showed that regardless of school district size, most school superintendents do not plan to use ITFS in the near future because funds are not available or because present in-class television systems are satisfactory. Among the minority of superintendents who will operationalize ITFS, most plan to do so within the next year. (Author/KP)

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BSSR 479

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NATIONWIDE SURVEY OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ON FUTURE UTILIZATION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION FIXED SERVICE

A Research Report Submitted to

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting

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Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.
1990 M Street, N.W.
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November 15, 1976

IR004 694

This report describes the results of a nationwide survey of school superintendents conducted for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting by the Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.. The study's purpose was to gather information on superintendents' planned use of the Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS) in their school districts and on how soon service would begin. Those who planned not to use ITFS were asked to give reasons for not doing so. For analytical purposes, data were also collected on size of district enrollment and current usage of any kind of in-class instructional television.

As explained to the superintendents in letters accompanying the questionnaire, the information gathered in this survey is to be used in planning the future use of ITFS as well as in preparation for a worldwide conference on radio spectrum allocation to be held in 1979.

Method.- The study was fielded during the summer of 1976. At that time a nationwide sample of 310 school districts with over 6,000 enrolled pupils was selected randomly by computer at the Research Department of the National Education Association in Washington. A postal card questionnaire and first and second mailing covering letters were drafted by BSSR in coordination with the Engineering and Research Development section at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The first mailing of questionnaires took place on July 7. A second follow-up mailing to those who did not respond to the first occurred on July 30. (See Appendix for samples of the questionnaire, covering letters and mailing envelopes.) All mailings were first-class with postage stamps affixed.

By the cut-off date for accepting questionnaires for analysis, September 30, 250 superintendents had responded for a return rate of 81 percent. (Table 1). The returns were stratified by enrollment size and compared to national enrollment figures. (Table 2). The data indicate a close correspondence between sample and national enrollment statistics. Given the high response rate and the sample's enrollment distribution compared to national enrollment data, the superintendents' responses may be considered representative of superintendents from the nations' school districts with enrollments of 6,000 pupils or more.

Questionnaires were edited and and transferred to computer cards for processing during the early part of October. Computer runs took place immediately thereafter.

Findings.- The questionnaire posed the following five questions to the superintendents:

Q1. Do you have any plans to use ITFS in your educational system?

Yes No Don't Know

Q2. If yes, how soon?

1 yr. 2yrs. 3yrs More than 3 yrs.

Q3. If no, is this because:

a. Funds are not available
b. Present TV service is satisfactory
c. In-class TV not desirable
d. Other_____

TABLE 1

RESPONSE RATE

Mailed Out	310
Undeliverable	1
Effective Base	309
Returned	250
Return Rate	81%*

*Two more questionnaires were received after the cut-off date, boosting the return rate to 82%.

TABLE 2

ENROLLMENT SIZE

Q4. "What is the present enrollment in your school district?"

	Sample freq.	Sample %	Nation* freq.	Nation* %
A. Under 10,000 pupils	121	49	648	42%
B. 10,000 - 30,000	98	39	732	47
C. 30,001 - 100,000	26	10	145	9
D. over 100,000	4	2	24	2
E. No Answer	1	**	-	-
Total	250	100	1,549	100%

*Based on NEA Research Department estimate, October 1976.

**Less than ½ percent.

Q4. What is the present enrollment in your school district?

a. Under 10,000 pupils
b. 10,000 - 30,000
c. 30,001 - 100,000
d. Over 100,000

Q5. Do you presently use any in-class television?

Yes No

Most superintendents say they do not plan to use the Instructional Television Fixed Service in the foreseeable future in their school districts. Six superintendents in ten say they definitely would not; about one-quarter do not know. (Table 3).

TABLE 3

PLANNED USE OF ITFS

Q1. "Do you have any plans to use ITFS in your educational system?"

	freq.	%
Yes	32	13
No	153	61
Don't Know	65	26
Total	250	100

The data suggest that school district size has little to do with whether a superintendent plans to use ITFS. Regardless of the number of pupils enrolled, nine out of every ten superintendents will not use ITFS or are undecided. There may be, however, a slight tendency for superintendents of larger districts - 30,000 and over - to be more inclined to use the service. (Table 4).

One finding stands out quite clearly. Superintendents of school districts which now do not employ any kind of in-class instructional television are even less motivated to use ITFS than those who do. Eight of every ten superintendents in the former group are against using

TABLE 4

PLANNED USE OF ITFS BY ENROLLMENT SIZE AND CURRENT IN-CLASS TV

"Do you have any plans to use ITFS in your educational system?"

	Total Sample (250)	Enrollment					Present Use of In-Class TV		
		Under 10,000 (121)	10,000-30,000 (98)	30,001-100,000 (26)	Over 100,000 (4)	No Answer (1)	Yes (206)	No (41)	No Answer (3)
Yes	13%	9%	13%	19%	50%	100%	15%	5%	-
No	61	63	60	62	50	-	58	80	33
Don't Know	26	28	27	19	-	-	28	15	67
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

the service in the future. About two in ten are undecided as well. (Table 4).

Some 13 percent of all superintendents say they will use ITFS, slightly more among the larger districts. Of these, about one-third will implement the system during the next year and about one fifth in each of the succeeding years. (Table 5).

TABLE 5

ESTIMATED YEAR OF UTILIZATION OF ITFS

Q2. "If 'yes', how soon?"

	freq.	%
1 yr.	11	34
2 yrs.	7	22
3 yrs.	6	19
More than 3 yrs.	7	22
Don't Know	1	3
Total	32	100

The data suggest further that superintendents from smaller districts are more likely to use ITFS earlier than their counterparts in districts with larger enrollments. It must be noted that this finding is only suggestive of utilization time frames since the data are based on a small number of superintendent responses. (Table 6).

Clearly, however, most superintendents are not planning to put ITFS into operation and funding problems are the main reason for not doing so. About half of these superintendents say "funds are not available at this time. Most of the rest feel their present in-class television set-ups are satisfactory. Only a handful feel that any kind of in-class television is not desirable. (Table 7).

TABLE 6

ESTIMATED YEAR OF UTILIZATION OF ITFS BY ENROLLMENT SIZE AND CURRENT IN-CLASS TV

"IF 'yes', how soon?"

	Total "yes" (32)	Enrollment					Present Use of In-class TV	
		Under 10,000 (11)	10,000-30,000 (13)	30,001-100,000 (5)	Over 100,000 (2)	No Answer (1)	Yes (30)	No (2)
1 Yr.	34%	36%	31%	20%	50%	100%	33%	50%
2 yrs.	22	27	23	20	-	-	23	-
3 yrs.	19	10	23	40	-	-	17	-
More than 3 yrs.	22	27	23	20	50	-	23	50
Don't Know	3	-	-	-	-	-	4	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE 7

REASONS FOR NOT
UTILIZING ITFS

Q3. "If 'no' or 'don't know': Is this because..."

	freq.	%
A. Funds are not available...	103	47
B. Present T.V. service is satisfactory:..	68	31
C. In-class T.V. not desirable...	6	3
D. Other reason...	28	13
E. Don't Know...	13	6
Total	218	100

The data strongly suggest that lack of funds is the main stumbling block for superintendents regardless of the size of their school districts. The problem appears especially acute among superintendents from districts with over 30,000 pupils.(Table 8).

What stands out most clearly is that superintendents from school districts which now do not have any in-class TV (16 percent, Table 9) are more likely to say they do not have funds for ITFS than those who do presently take advantage of some form of instructional television. About seven of ten superintendents without television in their school districts claim funds are not available for ITFS while less - four of ten - of those with television say they cannot afford ITFS. Among the latter, almost as many say their present TV service is satisfactory. (Table 8).

Summary of Findings.- Most school superintendents do not plan to use the Instructional Television Fixed Service in the near future because funds are not available or because their present in-class tele-

TABLE 8

REASONS FOR NOT UTILIZING ITFS BY ENROLLMENT SIZE AND CURRENT IN-CLASS TV

"If 'no' or 'don't know', is this because.....

	Total 'no,DK' (218)	Enrollment: Under 10,000 (110)	10,000-30,000 (85)	30,001-100,000 (21)	Over 100,000 (2)	Present Use of In-Class TV: Yes (101)	No (39)	No Answer (3)
A. Funds not available...	47%	47%	41%	71%	50%	43%	67%	67%
B. Present TV service satisfactory...	31	35	28	24	50	38	5	-
C. In-class TV not desirable...	3	3	4	-	-	2	8	-
D. Other...	13	12	18	-	-	15	3	-
E. Don't Know...	6	3	9	5	-	2	17	33
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE 9

CURRENT USE OF
IN-CLASS TELEVISION

Q5. "Do you presently use any in-class television?"

	freq.	%
Yes	206	82
No	41	16
No Answer	3	2
Total	250	100

vision systems are satisfactory.

Lack of funds is the more important reason among the superintendents regardless of the sizes of their school districts and is especially acute among the larger districts.

Lack of money for implementing ITFS is a troublesome problem among superintendents whose districts do not now use in-class TV. This may be the reason as well for not presently having any instructional television.

Among the minority of superintendents who say they will operationalize ITFS, a plurality will do so within the next year or so.

APPENDIX

Postal Card Questionnaire

Please circle the correct answer:

1. Do you have any plans to use ITFS in your educational system?

   YES NO DON'T KNOW

2. If YES, how soon? 1Yr.. 2Yrs.. 3Yrs.. More than 3Yrs.

3. If NO, or DON'T KNOW, is this because:

   a. Funds are not available
   b. Present TV service is satisfactory
   c. In-class TV not desirable
   d. Other _____(please write in)

4. What is the present enrollment in your school district?

   a. Under 10,000 pupils
   b. 10,000 - 30,000
   c. 30,001 - 100,000
   d. Over 100,000

5. Do you presently use any in-class television YES NO

THANK YOU! PLEASE MAIL CARD TODAY

Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.
1990 M Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036

Attention: Feinberg

Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.
1990 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 223-4300

July 7, 1976

Dear School Superintendent:

The Bureau of Social Science Research is conducting a survey for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting on the delivery of televised instruction to classrooms via the Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS). The results could have impo-tant implications for all educators.

As you may know, ITFS is a method of transmitting up to four simultaneous television channels from one central location to all schools in a district. The service was approved by the Federal Communications Commission in 1963 to provide instructional television service to school districts without the need for costly buildings and towers, complicated equipment and highly trained operational personnel. At this writing, ITFS is the only over-the-air TV service available to school districts which permits a wide variety of course materials to be sent to each school simultaneously.

Although it is impossible to fully explain the ITFS service in this brief letter we ask that you please take a few moments to answer the questions on the enclosed postal card and return it to us as soon as possible. Your district was randomly selected by computer and your responses will be used for statistical purposes only and not analyzed on an individual basis.

The survey results are to be used in planning the future use of the ITFS band, as well as in preparations for a worldwide conference on the uses of the radio spectrum to be held in 1979. Since your question responses will represent many others not included in the sample it is most important that you return the brief questionnaire. If you have any questions about the survey please feel free to contact me at BSSR, or Philip Rubin, Director of Engineering Research and Development at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting here in Washington (202-293-6160).

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Barry M. Feinberg

Barry M. Feinberg, Ph.D.
Study Director

BMF:pk

(First Mailing Covering Letter)

Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.
1990 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 223-4300

July 30, 1976

Dear School Superintendent:

As you may remember from my letter a few weeks ago, the Bureau of Social Science Research is conducting a survey for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting on utilization of the Instructional Television Fixed Service. The results are to be used in future planning for ITFS as well as in preparations for a worldwide conference on the uses of the radio spectrum to be held in 1979.

So far over 50 percent of the school superintendents in the survey have returned completed questionnaires. Since each superintendent's responses represent many others not included in the sample, it is important that we get back as many questionnaires as possible. In case you have misplaced or lost the questionnaire form, we have enclosed another for your convenience. Would you please take a few moments and fill it out. Remember, your district was randomly selected by computer and your responses will be used for statistical purposes only.

If you have any questions, contact Philip Rubin, Director of Engineering Research & Development at CPB (202-293-6160) or me at BSSR.

Sincerely yours,

Barry M. Feinberg, Ph. D.
Study Director

P. S. If you've already mailed the questionnaire, thanks again.

BMF/as

(Second Mailing Covering Letter)

Outgoing Envelope

Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.
1990 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036